

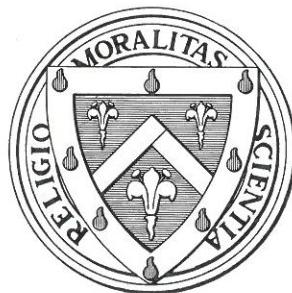
# MEASURE



SPRING

1942

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# Dissertation On A House

LEONARD HERRIGES

*When you have eyes that see beyond the reality of clapboards, windows, a roof, and a sill, then you are able to see the soul of a house and appreciate the story of its life. Mr. Herriges does this very thing — with depth and meaning.*

Did you ever stop to think that houses have character, just as every individual has character. For time and environment can give character to an inanimate building, as well as to human beings. Perhaps the greatest factor in the shaping of a house's character is the people that live in it. From the tumbled-down shack down by the tracks to the pent-house on Fifth Avenue, one can find character in wood, plaster, stone, and bricks; but the most interesting house I ever saw, stood alone on the plains of North Dakota.

What an environment that house had! Nothing in sight for miles and miles, nothing but plains — plains that were cracked and corroded with heat, flat, far-stretching fields baked to the solid gray of lifelessness, a land of dust that vanished into a wavering flutter of heat waves near the horizon. The copper sun blazed in an intensely blue sky that reflected itself in the blue gray sage-brush crouching in clumps over the plains as far as one could see. A black tar road began like a thread in the east, swept past the house in a rush of black, and vanished like a thread in the west. There was no sign of life except for a dusty-winged vulture gliding low and listlessly on dirty brown pinions, and a passing breath of air stirring dusty tumbleweeds in the ditch.

The house itself leaned back crazily, trying to hide its shabbiness behind a shabbier willow tree. It was a two-story frame building that had never felt the smooth stroke of a paint brush. The gray, seamed clapboards hung loosely to the siding. Some had yielded to the wind, and rotting side-walls showed through. Its roof was almost bald except for a few patches of weather-seared shingles. The remains of a stone chimney raised itself feebly above the roof-tree. The door had fallen in, and the black, gaping opening looked like a mouth open in surprise. Its windows yawned in mute blackness, like blank staring eyes.

The story of the house was easy to read. It was a house which could be classed as a derelict or an exile, passing its old age in loneliness and bitterness. Thus, no doubt, it had stood for years, longing for the days that had been and the good things that never came. Once it had been young and proud, a gleaming structure of fresh wood just hauled from the northern forests. That was the time when the young farmer who had built it, carried his bride across the threshold and proudly displayed

to her their new home, the center of their hopes for the coming years. They had worked at their new project eagerly. In the coolness of twilight they sat on the porch and discussed what a fine farm they would have. He told how he was setting out this field in wheat, that in corn; how the west acres would be just the thing for grazing land. She explained just how the kitchen ought to be arranged, how she was fixing the parlor, and what use they would make out of their wedding gifts.

Yes, the house had been a proud house in those days. But the house had been young then; its frame had been straight, erect, and its lumber smooth and resinous, its hopes high. Then the days, the weeks, and the years passed. The house waited in youthful patience. It saw the sage brush, blue gray beneath the midday sun. It saw the sage brush lying like a lambent sea beneath the bland October moon. The house looked on while the fields lay in long furrows of freshly plowed earth, and while the long green rows gleamed in the summer sun. It had known, too, the joyous days of the harvest, when the house was full of happy, care-free workers who toiled through the day between the rows of yellow-stalked corn and amber wheat, and who ate uproariously in the pale lamp-light about the great kitchen table. There was, too, the quiet, bitter stillness of winter when the sage brush and the stubbled fields were buried beneath a sea of snow that had no beginning and no end but blended in the distance with the slate-white of the winter sky. Then, too, there was the time in the middle of winter when the temperature was thirty below and the baby had fallen seriously ill. The father had to ride the fifty miles to the nearest town to get a doctor, while the young mother was left alone, wide-eyed and terrified, with a sick child. The house had done noble work for her that night as she sat before the roaring fireplace and listened to the moaning wind, and wailing cry of a prowling wolf. But the house and its owner weathered that night and many more like it until the house became a home.

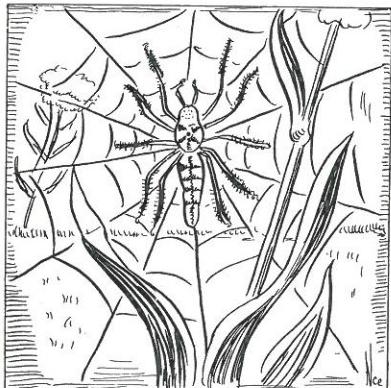
The years of plenty came, and the years of plenty went. Then came days of burning heat, long days of hot winds and driving dust storms that converted the thriving farm into a bleak wilderness. The clapboards and shingles of the house curled and cracked beneath the heat. Then came the sad day when the farmer packed his possessions, hitched up his wagons, and with his wife and child began the long journey to the north in search of better land.

Thus this house had been deserted in middle-age. No one attempted to farm this land again. The house had stood there all these years, growing older and older, and knowing no longer the joys of human habitation. It squatted here, a withered wreck behind a withered willow tree and mutely waited for the day when the wind would roar too strongly 'round its eaves, and its rotting beams, no longer able to resist, would collapse. It would fall and become no longer a house but a stack of rotting boards.

# Phidippus Audax

URBAN DUMMINGER

*This young author has been interested in spiders ever since he saw two of them killed on a boy's back with a shovel. His observations have been close and accurate, so he is well prepared to tell you about the deadly host of the unwary fly.*



How would you like to have a spider for a pet? Very probably you will answer with one emphatic "No!" Yet, I do not exactly blame you, for spiders do have a bad name. These little creatures have been accused of many crimes of which they are in reality innocent. One of these is attributed to the fact that the spider is equipped with fangs that emit poison. Remember, the spider must live as anyone else. Therefore, in order to disable his prey and to protect himself he injects his venom, which has a paralyzing effect. Because small insects are affected by a

spider bite is no indication that man will be so affected. I admit there are a few species whose bite will cause extreme pain and sickness. I refer to the "Black Widow," but there are no spiders that will cause death, at least not in these parts. For a number of years I have handled the most common species and must admit I was never once bitten. So do not permit yourself to be deceived any longer.

Spiders are beautiful and have many extremely interesting traits if you will just take the time to observe them. Although I have made general observations of the Golden Garden spider, the Common House spider, the "Daddy-longlegs," the "Harvestmen," and many other species, I have been especially attracted to the Phidippus Audax, more commonly known as the jumping spider, just because of this particular trait.

The name "Audax" distinguishes this particular species of Phidippus from the many other Phidippi.

It was really by accident that I happened to meet this little fellow. One day last summer, I was given a bag by a fellow-student in which, so he said, there was a "Black Widow." Thinking I had a rare specimen, I hurried to my locker and very carefully opened the paper; out jumped Mr. Phidippus Audax. I tried with difficulty to pick him up with my tweezers, for as I approached him he kept retreating. When I thought

I had finally cornered him, he very gracefully hopped over my tweezers and began to run for dear life. By forcing him to climb onto my hand I succeeded in capturing him. I put him into a bottle where I observed him for over a month. Then I killed him in alcohol and preserved him.

Now you say: "You have been talking of a spider with whom I am not at all familiar. Please tell me just what he looks like." I will try to give you a clear, but general, description of him. You may have seen a *Phidippus Audax* running along a sunny sidewalk, fencepost, or brick wall, for he loves the warm sunshine. He is a small, black, hairy spider with a characteristic red or yellow spot upon his back. His two large eyes are located on the front of his head unlike most spiders whose eyes are found on the top of the head. He has two smaller pairs of eyes that are arranged along the edge of his black head, which reminds me of the turret on an army tank. The jaws are a shiny green and move, unlike our own, in a vertical manner, that is they move back and forth instead of up and down. At the tip of each there is a tiny ruby-colored fang. His two palpi, hand-like legs that aid him in eating, are covered with a thick coat of light-brown hair. In order to hold his victims more tightly, his two front legs are much larger and stronger than any of the others. His legs are striped brown and black.

The characteristic feature of the *Phidippus Audax*, as I have mentioned before, is his great ability to run and jump. When you consider the nature of this spider, you find that this ability is a great necessity. For he does not build silken snares in which to trap his prey, but like the robber-knight of Chaucer's time, he ambushes his victims. I discovered this when I put live flies into the jar in which I kept my specimen. He would pay no attention to the fly as it flew about. But as soon as it settled, Mr. *Phidippus* suddenly pivoted, watched it closely, and waited. When the fly attempted to fly, the spider sprang upon it, stabbed it in the neck with his fangs, and began to drain the feeble body of its various juices upon which spiders live. It all happened in a second or two. Of all the flies I have fed him, I have never seen my *Phidippus* miss a single one.

In courtship, the *Phidippus Audax* might run Fred Astaire good competition. As he approaches the female, he raises his forelegs high above his head and waltzes before her, showing his beautiful body. However, she shrinks from him, and for some time she remains unmoved and surveys him with coldness and caution. This dancing may keep up for a long time before she will consent. Once the male has fertilized the eggs, he leaves the female, for, as I have observed, if he should remain she may attack and kill him.

For the sake of experiment, I put two males together in the same jar. At first they took little notice of each other. Naturally, I was not a little disappointed. After about fifteen minutes the trouble started. The one fellow got too near the other — that meant war. For some time

they continued to stare at each other, but neither wanted to knock the chip off the other's shoulder. Then they began to move in a circle, ever on the alert. The smaller of the two began to make rushes at the other, until, finally, they came together. The fight which ensued was very short. The larger, naturally having the advantage, killed the smaller. At any rate the little fellow wasn't a coward.

In conclusion, then, I hope this little essay will help remove some of the intolerant views you may bear toward the spider. Although he may at times become a nuisance by spreading his web in the corners of your room, he does you a great favor by killing many of the germ-carrying insects. He is even contributing his share toward our national defense by giving his web which is used for gun sights. No one can really estimate the good work he does.

# Times Do Change

CLIFFORD RIEDE

*Here it is not so much the combination of man and horse, for that union is very old, but the simple soul of an old man. You will enjoy his warm humanity.*



It was four a. m. one Saturday when through the cold, uninviting darkness of Gray Street, the sound of a horse's hoofs hitting against the street could be heard. These rhythmic beats that broke the early morning silence united in turn with an incessant creak of a wagon. Such antiquated noises were produced by the horse and wagon of one Joseph Thompson.

Thompson, more commonly known as Uncle Joe, had delivered milk on and around Gray Street for the past thirty-five years. Well, it really was only thirty-four years and eleven months because one month ago an incident occurred —

Mr. Henly of Henly's Dairy had permitted Uncle Joe to keep the old horse and wagon as long as it was humanly possible. However, the time finally came when it was only right that a fast-moving, streamlined truck should replace the slow-moving vehicle. Since Joe didn't know any too much about the mechanism of the present-day truck he thought it best to retire and live on the small capital that he had saved. After this decision the few days of work that remained for Uncle Joe sped swiftly by.

How well he remembered his last day. On that morning almost every one of his customers had made it a point to be up at the hour he came around. The Martin family, all eight of them, had greeted him on his arrival at their doorstep. They presented him with several tokens of their esteem, among which the large jar of Mother Martin's jam caught his eye. In much the same manner he was greeted and handshaked by the rest of his faithful customers. As a vendee of Uncle Joe's, the householder had felt it his or her duty to congratulate him for his wonderful years of service and to wish him well for the future.

Old Thompson's wagon was fairly stuffed with pleasant gifts as he made his last stop on the block. Unlike the other homes that he'd visited, this place was quite silent and seemed enshrouded in the chilly grayness of the morn. As Joe made his way up the steps there appeared to be no

sign of life. Yet, there was a milk bottle on the doorstep with a white collar around its neck — apparently (thought Joe) a note asking for credit or another quart of milk. However, unlike the usual notes that were in milk bottles this one was a note of money. Some of the money — so the slip said — was for the long overdue bill and the rest — which was quite a generous amount — was for the grand old man who delivered the milk.

When he had replaced the empty bottle with one from his wagon, Thompson's eyes began to fill and a tear or so wended its way down his weather-beaten face. The people that lived in this house had always been rather harsh and cold toward him. However, now when the moment came they, too, had proved their admiration for him, although in a mute way.

He began to realize more than ever how empty life would be without his work. Like most people past the half century mark, he'd found it very easy to rise and start his morning's labor. Now after today he would have to rearrange his scheduled way of living. There would be a good eight hours more of leisure, what would he do? Oh, well, there was no use of his standing there on someone else's doorstep bemoaning the fact. So he went down to his wagon and drove slowly off, still thinking about his new life that he was going to lead so soon.

Once back at the dairy plant, there was a committee composed of the leading members of the firm that met him. With all the pomp and ceremony that is given a president, Joe was presented with a silver plaque denoting his years of service to Henly's. After the presentation there arose from the crowd of men the familiar words, "speech, speech." It looked as though Joe was going to have to talk.

Nervously he took a step forward and was all prepared to express his appreciation to the men gathered there, when suddenly his eyes filled to their capacity and his throat seemed closed. Nevertheless, with a few short coughs he regained his voice; yet there came forth only one word which expressed Joseph Thompson so well. The word was "thanks."

From the crowd there came cheers that could only be given one such as Uncle Joe. However, in half an hour's time the assembly had dispersed, the speechmaking and celebrating was over. In a kind of hazy manner Joe found his way to the stall of old Meg.

The old gray horse had pulled Joe's wagon for the last ten years. During this brief decade the man and animal had become as friendly as it was possible for man and beast. Besides this friendship with Joe, Meg had many others, although not quite as intimate. Because of the men's likeness for her, she had been the instigator of many a close relationship between the men. She was their mascot, as it were, and there was never a more royally treated mascot than she. Each man in the dairy would at some time or another, bring her some little remembrance, formerly it was sugar, now apples and carrots had replaced this apparent rarity.

It was through the general fondness for Meg that the company had not long ago replaced her with an up-to-date truck. However, speed finally took the upper hand and Meg was to be honorably discharged. In a way the men were going to feel the absence of Meg as much as Joe would. Yet, it was not too hard for him to bid good-bye to his companion since Mr. Henly had assured Uncle Joe that old Meg would enjoy the rest of her years on a farm just outside the city. If Joe desired he could visit this friend as often as he wished. Thus with a few sentimental pats of his roughened, wrinkled hand on the horse's mane he walked slowly out of the stable.

A person who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow usually looks forward to the time that he can lay aside his work and enjoy life to its fullest extent — not so Uncle Joe. His first day at home was a restless one; in fact, a very restless one. The usual interesting stamp album proved dull and tiring after a few minutes spent leafing through it. The radio seemed to give forth nothing but serials that had long ago proved boring to Joe Thompson, and the doorbell, well, this instrument put the finishing touches to Joe. As he opened the door for the tenth time, he resembled in every detail how the average man looks before becoming mentally deranged. Life just couldn't go on like this forever. Something must be done or else the name of Joseph Thompson would appear very shortly in the obituary column. Surely he could find something to do if it was only (and heaven forbid) to help his other brethren tell the world about the latest thing in brushes or safety razors.

At all events an announcement over the radio several days later stopped him from accepting another job. The Japs had attacked Pearl Harbor. It was evident (so the announcer said) that the United States was definitely in this second World War. Joe was thoroughly worked up, and it was only because of his age that he kept from joining the armed forces. He had helped in the last war, which disaster was still vivid in his memory. Yes, his age was telling on him; otherwise he would have shouldered a gun as any loyal American would.

With the war news there appeared in the papers a very interesting item about the non-production of motor vehicles. It appeared that tires would be rationed, too. One columnist wrote: "It looks as though we will go back to the horse and buggy days." Such a sentence caused Joe to feel shaken and rather queer inside. Would that mean that there was a chance of getting his old job back? They would surely need men since Uncle Sam was calling most of his boys to the army. Yes, perhaps fate had arranged it all . . . .

High above the sound of the horse's hoofs and the creaking of a wagon one could hear a low sweet whistle, it was coming from a very contented milk man.

# Primitive Man

STEVEN D. THEODOSIS

*Mr. Theodosis, a Senior, here gathers together for your convenience all the loose items about early man. This is factual, but solid — and entirely profitable.*

Haven't you ever been confronted with articles pertaining to primitive man that in some way or another presented questions to your mind that were intriguing, questions that sent you off in search of information that would serve to satisfy your curiosity? Perhaps you turned to lighter, less serious thinking and wondered how primitive man managed to settle his arguments and convince his opponents without the use of howitzers.

The scientist, however, realizes the seriousness of the problem and with his investigations he penetrates the nebulous past with such questions, as: Does man's existence transcend the boundaries of ancient history? Dare we say man existed a quarter of a million years ago? Dare we speak of an ape man? And if so what do we mean? Did man once roam the earth pitting his intelligence wittingly against fang and claw and brute strength — a survival of the fittest?

In my thesis of man, it is not my intention to put forward arguments in favor of advancing or renouncing any evolutionary theories, hence I shall speak neither of permanentism or of theistic evolution. I shall not discuss creation, but of man's existence after creation. I intend to present the substance with which paleontologists reason that such and such an individual existed at such and such a time. His existence, in time relation to his origin has not and may never be definitely established, hence we can reconstruct a past only as far as evidence pointing to the existence of a rational man permits us to do so.

The history of man is, quite naturally, of particular interest to most of us; and quite naturally we would wish to inquire into it in greater details than in case of other animal lines. The eagerness for details regarding human history is, however, somewhat embarrassing to the paleontologist. Prehistoric humans are for obvious reasons, among the rarest of fossils. With his superior intelligence, man generally avoided such common catastrophes as miring and drowning. Of course, this did not reduce the number who died, but it lessened their chances for burial where preservation would be likely. Consequently the history of the early development of mankind and of his civilization is constructed from the study of the stone and metal tools which have been preserved and which have been found by modern man, supplemented by the comparatively few known skeletal remains.

On the basis of the principal materials used for making tools, the

history of man is divided into three major divisions of ages — the stone age, the bronze age, and the iron age. The ages are to be regarded as stages of culture rather than as definite time intervals. For most races, the iron age falls in historic time and the bronze age is on the borderland between history and legend and it is in the stone age that we confront primitive man.

#### THE STONE AGE

The stone age may be defined as the stage in man's progress during which he used tools made only of stone or of similar substances, such as horn, ivory and bone, in addition to wooden tools. The products of such human workmanship, regardless of how crude, have been termed "artifacts." The style of workmanship changed with time during the stone age, just as it does in the modern world; and as it is easy to distinguish the relative ages of a collection of colonial flintlocks and one of high-powered rifles, so it is also possible to distinguish the cultures of stone implements.

The first tools used by man were doubtless those accidentally shaped by nature to fit his hand, such as sharp edged chips of flint that he could use to scrape skins or fashion wooden tools. Such stone, which he picked up and used with slight modification, are known as "eoliths" from the Greek *eos* meaning dawn, and *lithos* meaning stone, hence dawn stones. Showing evidence of wear, but not of much conscious shaping, they represent the lowest stages of human culture and are found in formations ranging from 150,000 to as old as a million years or more. Considerable dispute has accentuated the eolithic age. Perhaps these artifacts were wholly shaped by weather, but even at that it is generally accepted, however, that they were used by man.

That they were once used by man is augmented by the occurrence of the artifacts in strata hundreds of miles away at times from the actual source of the material from which they were made, strata whose ages supplement paleontologists beliefs.

Out of this and from the remains of several skeletal representatives of this age governing nearly 750,000 years, comes a reconstruction of "dawn man" in the individual Pithecanthropus. Let us imagine ourselves drawing the curtain of the past aside as we visualize man's earliest known appearance on the stage of life. We see him surrounded in our conceptual haziness.

His name Pithecanthropus, comes from the Greek *pithecos*, meaning ape, and *anthropus*, meaning man, so called because of his apelike structure. The skull is apelike, with a very low, narrow forehead and frontal region, but it has a brain capacity, little, if any, less than that of some human skulls. The inner surface of his skull shows that the brain centers controlling speech were so developed that, probably Pithecanthropus could talk. The teeth are more human than apelike, but the areas of attachment of the great neck muscles at the back of the skull prove

that the head was carried in a very apelike manner. Nevertheless, the shaft of the thigh is remarkably straight, showing that the creature walked quite erect and its length suggests a stature of about 5 feet 6 inches.

That Pithecanthropus was an ape is hardly probable since animals do not make use of tools, let alone make them and they do not progress mentally as is evidenced in the production of artifacts. His reconstruction has been questioned by many scientists. Though seemingly irregular Pithecanthropus is more than a speculation for there does not appear any scientific evidence cogently making for the strong improbability of Pithecanthropus from scientific data or even from philosophic principle. True, until further proof is presented to definitely establish such features in such an individual, Pithecanthropus must remain doubtful as a man of such characteristics. However, he is regarded and mentioned since artifacts give logical evidence of a reasonably similar being to have existed, or a highly probable hypothetical facimile.

If the time table determining the age of the skeletal remains and artifacts is correct and assuming that the evidence interpreted by our paleontologists who have spent their whole lives scientifically analyzing the same, is true, then we can say that this eolithic man slowly transcended into *paleolithic* man. He had learned to flake off pieces of stone and to shape them by chipping it into scrapers, hand axes, spear heads and other useful tools. Burials were also made and from these have been gathered information that has led us to reconstruct a representative that is believed to have lived from and during 50 to 150,000 years ago. He is the best known of all the extinct species of men and because he was first described from Neanderthal in Germany, which means Neander Valley, he is known as the Neanderthal man. A score of localities have yielded Neanderthal remains, most of them cave deposits. They are scattered in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Croatia, and Palestine.

The Neanderthals were stocky and short. The head differed from that of modern man in the very low forehead, heavy brow ridges and receding chin. The face was undoubtedly big-featured and brutal. Nevertheless, the brain was approximately equal in size to that of modern man of from 1400 to 1600 B. C. Although he stood upright, the carriage was more like that of a great ape than is that of a living man, because the spine lacked the fourth or cervical curvature and the thigh bones were sigmoidally curved in compensation.

The Neanderthals knew how to kindle a fire, for hearths have been found in their cave abodes. In at least two instances the skeletons have been found in their original burial places where they have been laid away with implements, paints, and food, indication that the race held a belief in immortality, and buried the dead with ceremonial rites.

Suddenly during the late Paleolithic age, the Neanderthal man disappeared to be replaced by a very superior race of men that appeared in southern Europe some 50,000 years ago. These men had high foreheads,

with a brain fully as large as in modern races, well-defined chins, jaws not protruding and clearly belonging to the modern species, *Homo Sapiens*. They have been called Cro-Magnon race for the original discovery of five skeletons at the rock shelter of Cro-Magnon in the French village of Les Eyzies.

Unlike the Neanderthaloids, the Cro-Magnons were tall and straight with relatively long legs, straight thigh bones, and the complete double curvature as in modern man. In physical development they are essentially modern. They used bows and arrows and they dressed themselves in fur. Their bodies they ornamented with marine snail shells, derived from the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts. In them also we witness the development of an art and culture that excites the wonder and admiration of all anthropologists.

The Cro-Magnons were the last of the Paleolithic races in Europe. Unlike the older races, the Cro-Magnon stock was not exterminated but became the direct ancestors of the living races of South Europeans.

The art of finishing stone implements by grinding and polishing was developed in southern Europe approximately 20,000 years ago, and a new culture, the Neolithic, quickly spread over the continent. It was accompanied by the development of the art of making pottery, the domestication of animals, and the adoption of habits of communal life. Later on, permanent habitation in the form of some stone or wooden huts or tents of skin became general and agriculture was pursued. To secure protection, villages were commonly built on piles over lake shores, swamps or streams.

With the spread of Neolithic culture, civilization had truly begun, replacing the barbarism and savagery of Paleolithic peoples. There is evidence of this change in human affairs as early as 18,000 B. C. in Asia Minor, Arabia, and Persia. Probably the oldest center of Neolithic culture yet known is the ancient city of Susa in Persia, which is said to date from 20,000 century B. C. The culture had spread to the island of Crete by 14,000 B. C. and to Denmark by about 12,000 B. C.

Consequently we have formed a concept of primitive man. No convulsive reactions are necessary to illustrate the necessity for further investigation. Whether science without the help of philosophy shall ever succeed in reaching definite conclusions remains to be seen. It must be remembered, however, that what science accentuates is not in any way contradictory to itself or to philosophic reasoning. The paleontologists promulgations are explainable and as reasonable as the sun's distance is to the astronomer, as radio-activity is to the physicist, as photosynthesis is to the biologist or as relativity is to the future scientist or philosopher.

Hence, let us not be prejudiced in regarding new findings, data which may help mould the key to treasures of information, treasures that will cast forth light upon the hidden genealogy of man.

# The Best

JAMES CHANNELL

*This is of the theatre, brief and pointed. Your enjoyment will be commensurate with your enthusiasm for the boards, the wig, for all the things of make-believe of that other world across the lights.*

Although I always wondered why the actors respected Joe, the stagehand, so much, I never found out until after thirteen years on the stage.

It was April fifteenth. We opened with "Hamlet" at the Wintergarden. I had the lead, my favorite role. The house was full and everyone was expectant.

As the tragedy ended the applause roared like planes leaving formation — a great applause, but not for me. I sensed that. For five years I had received most of the cheering but today I did not. A new actor cast as Claudius had outdone me.

Then I knew I was finished; I was retreating. All my life I knew this time would have to come, but now it seemed a surprise. Why, I wasn't slipping — but there had been the audience cheering another.

In my dressing room, as I mused on the quirks of life, Joe came in without knocking. In his calloused hand he bore a beautiful briar pipe. Joe was a connoisseur of pipes. He filled this one from a can, lighted it and sat and looked. Neither of us spoke. I lighted a cigarette and sat by my table.

"Jim," the stage-man said, "I know."

"Yea," I answered, "I'm through. Oh, not just yet, but I won't last much longer. Another season, maybe, but no more."

If I expected Joe to seem sympathetic, I was wrong.

"Now, isn't that awful," he scoffed. "You've been top man for five years, and now you cry because you can't keep the front seat. You're sore because someone's better than you. That's the trouble with actors. They'll steal popularity and hoard it, but if someone takes it from them, they yell that they've been cheated."

"I'm not bawling, Joe," I answered, for I could be tough too. It's just that I hate to quit. The stage has been my whole life, Joe. This is giving up all I've ever done or had."

I hesitated, then went on — sincerely this time, "Or maybe that



isn't just it. I guess I can't kid you. You're right. It is that I hate to see that youngster taking my 'stuff' from me. Like all actors, I'm selfish. I always thought I was the best. Now I see that I'm not and I can't take it."

"The best," he mused aloud. "Yea, we're all the best or want to be. The best what? You thought yourself the best actor; I think I'm the best stage-hand. Some day though, I'll find somebody better than I. I know I will."

"I did tonight."

"Before you went on tonight I knew you would find a better. Something reminded me of a story; then I knew your time of disillusionment was here. I came in here to tell you that story. I don't know why I remembered it so vividly tonight. Maybe it was because of the similarity of the plays. I don't know."

"Anyhow, a company was playing 'Macbeth' in Chicago about fifteen years ago. Although not quite a genius, the leading man was very good. Never mind his name; you wouldn't remember him anyhow. He thought he was the best, too."

"That night — it was on a Saturday — he felt exceptionally well. If ever this actor was confident, it was then."

"Through the first act he did wonderfully. In one scene he received a minute and a half individual applause."

"Then came the second act. As he stood in the wings looking around at the scene changes — he always admired and was thrilled by stage work — this actor became scared."

"Now, you know and I know that if there's anything an actor dreads, it's the losing of a cue and slowness in picking it up. He knows that if he loses his line and can't find some way to get back on it, his alertness is slipping — and alertness is essential to an actor. Well, in the third scene of the second act in this particular play this actor lost his cue. 'Macduff' had given the cue. The next line was 'Macbeth's' — our actor's; the next again was 'Macduff's.' If 'Macbeth,' whose line changed the course of the plot, could not get back on the track, the chain was broken. Anyone else's picking it up would be almost impossible. It's one of those cases where the line must be known."

"There, 'Macduff' had given his line. Nobody in the wings paid much attention until there came a long pause. 'Macbeth' had lost his line! None of the actors knew what to do. They just waited helplessly. Suddenly 'Macbeth' looked around frightened. He was no longer the best. He bolted from the stage crying. The curtain came down. The show was ruined."

"Why did he do that? You see, he thought he was the best, and when he found out his limitations, he couldn't take it. How much better off he would have been if he had found out he wasn't best before he actually failed! You were lucky to have it happen to you the way it did."

Joe's pipe wasn't out, but he re-lit it. The operation hid his eyes from me. Somehow, now, I wondered why I had not known before that Joe had been an actor.

We both sat in silence.

Finally I spoke and asked, "I didn't know anything like this ever happened to you, Joe."

"It never did," he answered deliberately. "I found out just like you did tonight. Someone else got a bigger hand than I did."

"But," I demanded, "what about the story?"

"A stage-hand told me that night of my disillusionment just as I told you. It helped me, so I hoped it would help you."

It did.

That all happened two years ago. Now if you are ever back-stage in New York, look on the cat-walk or switchboard or someplace. If you see two workers patting each other's backs, say howdy to Joe and me, because now we're the two best stage-hands in the city.



*The Router*

MEN WORKING

*Elements*



# Gandy Dancers

THOMAS JOYCE

*Mr. Joyce writes with the authority of one of this very group of tough and ready railroad men. They know something of the spirit of hardship, something of one of the last vestiges of pioneering.*



Through the darkness of the cut, east of the station, streaks the Rocky Mountain Rocket, its oscillating beam having warned of its approach several minutes before. The striking red and silver bullet glides past to the depot at an alarming speed. One would little think that it was scheduled to stop, but stop it does with the seeming ease of a toy train under the playful hands of its juvenile master. And, there stands Junior. Ah, yes, Junior is there every night. It would be something serious if he were to miss the arrival and departure of Number 43.

Passengers take turns in getting off and then getting on, but Junior is oblivious to everything transpiring around him. His attention is directed wholly toward that romantic person, clad in blue denim, who sits behind the throttle in the comely cab of this streamlined mastodon.

Suddenly the purring engines assume a deeper tone and this palace on wheels starts to creep slowly westward. Then, with a determined roar of motors, suddenly turned powerful, the beaver tail passes the awe-stricken boy leaving only the throbbing of cylinders and the clanking of wheels ringing in his ears, and the incessant desire burning in his soul.

Oh yes! It is romantic to be an engineer; those brave men of the railroad who keep our rolling stock rolling. But it is the singularly unromantic labors of the section men that should attract our admiration. These fellows are men among men, but only "gandy dancers" among railroaders.

Well do these rugged individuals know the hardships of inclement weather. Day in and day out they put their motor car on the track, get their keg full of water and their train schedule for the day and putter out to the assigned location, where they take up their arduous tasks.

When the sun looses its blistering heat rays in the midst of the hot summer, no place on earth radiates more heat than the silver ribbons of steel which link the width and breadth of our nation. Yet, this is the

time that most construction and repairs are done upon our railroads; work of the heaviest and most exhausting kind. Lifting and carrying enormous steel rails, dumping new ballast from gondola cars to fill in the places where heavy traffic has caused the bed to sink, putting in new ties oozing of preservative creosote oil the vapors of which are very caustic to the skin — these are but a few of the many jobs a gandy dancer must do.

Occasionally during these torrid days comes an unexpected torrential downpour after the sun has been unmercifully hot during the morning hours. The rain may fall in sheets but these men, hardened against the teeth of nature, cannot seek shelter. That is simply out of the question! The job they have started must be finished. Suppose one of the new streamliners or any other train would pass over a piece of track left unspiked and, therefore, unsafe, because the section crew sought shelter from a storm. Many lives would be placed in danger and much property would be liable to destruction. Obviously, then, these men must stay on the job through blazing days of heat and even during biting rain storms spurred on by the driving wind.

The situation is eased slightly during the cold, clammy winter months because the demands upon the laborers are not so exacting. The winter work schedule assumes a more routine nature consisting mainly of maintenance work. This entails keeping the joints of the rails raised and level when many hundreds of pounding wheels are constantly forcing them to settle at the joints and to raise in the center. If this condition would be tolerated, the running surface of the rail will become rough and result in trains having a generally unstable riding quality. The Gandys also must keep switches free of snow to prevent their freezing, and clear the embankments of the right-of-way of their summer accumulation of weeds and brush. In this way they spend many days in swirling snow when mercury is trying to establish a new low.

Men of this category have gotten little recognition prior to our times. Why should they? They have done nothing except to keep our railroads operating smoothly and efficiently. But that seemingly insignificant task now takes an importance alarming in proportions in our concentrated war effort. Smoothly functioning and efficiently operated railroads are a prime necessity in time of war. The United States has the finest railroads in the world, and it is these unsung heroes of sweat and toil who keep them that way. But the worth of these fellows experienced in outdoor labor does not end here.

To have a winning army, a corps of engineers who get things done is quite mandatory and we do have a superb engineering division. Many of the recruits who have done their individual parts in making the engineers what they are, were seasoned men taken right from the labor of the tracks and placed directly in the engineers' corps where they could do the most good.

Let's not forget, the next time we dream about the romance of the railroad, to give a little thought to the gandy dancers. They are really the "backbone of the ribbed roadbed."

# Annie

HARRY ROEHRIG

*To make the most of this, you must have known and appreciated some old jalopy. But then, what college man hasn't?*



I want to tell you about Annie. Even though Annie is my automobile, I have always looked upon her as my friend. She was the first and only car that I ever had. I bought her back in '29 and in those days she was considered a very snap-dappy model. I bought her on time and was just as proud of her as a man could possibly be.

All my friends scoffed at me for keeping her all these years instead of trading her in on a later and better equipped model. But I didn't mind at all when they passed Annie up with their new

flashy autos. I know that it's silly but I'm a sentimental guy and I just never could bring myself to part with her. Why should I? She'd stood by me through thick and thin, never causing me any real trouble. 'Course I've had to spend money on her — new parts in exchange for the old ones that wore out — but she's still Annie even to the ridiculous little horn with its nasal sneer.

Annie and I've had so many memorable times together and she's done me so many favors that I could never even consider parting company with her. Why, I courted Clara while driving around in Annie. We went on many happy excursions — picnics, little trips and just plain Sunday-driving. I even asked Clara to marry me while parked on top of a moon-drenched hill. Clara said "yes" to me and I've always thought that, in a way, Annie was responsible. I took Clara to the hospital in Annie when it was time for our baby to be born. The baby didn't live but that wasn't Annie's fault. She'd gotten us to the hospital just as fast as her wheels would revolve.

I've always thought that Annie was — well, human! When I talked to her, I seem to hear her answer me with the soft purr of her engine. I've told her all my troubles and it's given me confidence and solace just to do so. We've been happy riding together all these years (except that one time coming back from the hospital) and we've always had a perfect understanding.

We've spent a good deal of time together, too, because I make my living by traveling for a hardware corporation. If it hadn't been for Annie, I wouldn't have gotten the job in the first place. It's been plenty tough on the old girl, all that mileage, rough roads and everything, but Annie has held up wonderfully under the strain.

It was my job that really started all this trouble. One day last year — about the end of October, I think it was — I was called to the office of Mr. Linden, my boss and the District Manager of the company. I didn't know what it was all about. Although I wasn't worried, my curiosity was getting the better of me as I made my way down the long corridor to Mr. Linden's office.

Miss Clarkston greeted me cordially as I entered the waiting room. She's Mr. Linden's receptionist — as pretty and bright a young girl you've never seen. "Go right in. Mr. Linden's expecting you," she said, that sweet smile of hers flickered momentarily.

"Sit down, George," Mr. Linden said as I entered the room. "No, over here close to my desk," he added when I started to seat myself in an inconspicuous brown leather chair. "I've called you here for a matter that, I dare say, won't be entirely distasteful to you."

"Yes, sir," I put in, not knowing quite what to say. By this time my curiosity was bubbling towards the surface and must have been apparent. However, Mr. Linden took no notice of it.

"Well, George," he continued, "it's like this. A national emergency is undoubtedly approaching, so there is necessarily going to be a shortage of any number of commodities. However, we don't expect our business to be hindered too much and you will continue to be on the road as you are now."

What was he driving at? Had he called me to his office to discuss the war that was looming in the future?

"The point, George, is this. That car of yours is pretty old, you'll admit, so it can't continue to stand up under constant usage much longer. The company has decided that you will have to have a new one. Because automobiles won't be available much longer, we feel that it is necessary for you to have a new one now so that your work won't be interrupted later on . . . I'm sure you understand. If you trade your old one in, the company will pay the difference on a new model. How does that sound to you?"

His words struck me a fierce blow. It was so sudden! Part with Annie? Such a thought had never entered my mind. I just couldn't up and turn her in to a used car dealer. Why, it would be like selling my best friend down the river.

"Is it absolutely necessary, Mr. Linden?" I asked. "Annie, that's what I call my car, is still in good enough condition. I've taken the best care of her and I'm sure she'll keep on giving me fine service."

"I'm afraid to have you take the chance, George," he stated simply.

"You know, an old car like that can't last forever. And why should you risk it when we are willing to furnish you with a new one?"

"But you don't understand," I tried to explain. "Annie's more to me than just a car. She's stood by me in all kinds of weather all these years. I just couldn't treat her that way. Why, I'd feel like a criminal to turn her in. Then, too, I just know I'd never be at home behind the wheel of another."

"That is just about the most ridiculous bit of nonsense that it has ever been my displeasure to hear. It seems to me that, when the company is generous enough to offer to pay the expenses, you'd be more than pleased to comply with our wishes. I don't mean to be unpleasant, but we simply can't afford to take the chance. If your car breaks down when no more cars can be had, the company would lose its salesman of a valuable route. You'll either have to get this new car or we'll have to get a new man. You may have a few days to change your mind and, if you do, you can go after the car any time. That's all. You may go."

"Yes, sir. Thank you," I muttered, as I rose and made my way towards the door.

I felt terrible. My face must have shown it, too, for, as I went into the waiting room, Miss Clarkston asked, What's the matter with you? You look like you've lost your last friend."

"That's just about it," I said. He wants to buy me a new car."

"Is that all?" she laughed. "Why, isn't that a crime? I wish somebody would put that offer to me. I bet I'd look just about the opposite of the way you do right now."

I stumbled out into the street and made my way home. Annie seemed to ask me what I was going to do but I didn't know what to tell her. I couldn't afford to lose my job. I had Clara to think of. But I couldn't part with Annie. What could I do?

That night I talked it over, point by point, with Clara. I repeated my conversation with Mr. Linden as closely as I could remember it. I told her how I felt about it; how much it would mean to me to have to give up Annie.

When I had finished my story, Clara sat quietly for a minute. Then, finally, she spoke. "I know how you feel, George. I know how much Annie means to you. She means a lot to me, too. I remember that night on the mountain and I remember all the other times, too. Annie means a lot to both of us, you know. We both have our memories. But don't you think you're carrying sentiment too far? After all, Annie's not really human, even though you like to think so. She doesn't actually have feelings. So, it really wouldn't make any difference to her what you did. If you lose your job — well, you know you're not as young as you used to be. We've been married twelve years now and we didn't marry early in life, either. If you throw over this job — you know how much your work *does* mean to you; you've been with the company since right after

our marriage — it might not be easy to find another. Then, too, you might think of Annie. She's been doing her best for you for a good many years — you bought her back in '29, didn't you? Don't you think that it's about time that she had a rest? She deserves it."

Thanking Clara for always being such a sweet, wise, understanding wife, I told her that I'd have to sleep on the idea before coming to a decision.

However, I didn't sleep any too much that night. I just couldn't take the thought of parting with Annie off my mind. I kept telling myself that Clara was right — Annie did need a rest. But how could she get that rest if she were traded in on the new car to a dealer who would sell her again to some one else who might not give her as good care as I had. Finally, thinking that I had come to the only possible conclusion, I went to sleep.

Next morning when I got up, Clara was already in the kitchen getting breakfast. I suspect she was trying to cheer me up because she was fixing my very favorite breakfast — golden brown waffles with maple sirup and little pork sausages. Not that I didn't enjoy it, but she needn't have gone to extra pains. I had already made up my mind.

"Clara," I said, "what do you think of this idea? Mr. Linden said that if I traded Annie in, the company would put up the rest of the money. I still can't bring myself to part with Annie but I thought that, if I took her and had her appraised by the dealer, I could put up an amount equal to what he would be willing to allow for her. Then I could give this money to Mr. Linden for the purchase of the new car. He'd be satisfied and I'd have Annie. I've been saving up quite a tidy little sum for a rainy day and this certainly looks like a rainy day to me. I could keep Annie in the garage. We could still ride around in her for our own enjoyment even if I do have to travel in the new one."

"Seems like a good idea, George, if you've got your heart set on keeping Annie and you feel that we can afford it. In fact, I'm in favor of it. I don't want to lose Annie either. You go right ahead and do it."

Clara's agreement was all I needed to make me absolutely certain that I was going to do the right thing. As soon as I had finished my breakfast — and it was mighty hard to tear myself away from those waffles — I drove Annie down to the automobile dealer's car lot. I kept telling Annie on the way, "It's all right, old girl, nobody's going to separate us." But Annie, for the first time, just didn't respond. I guess she knew where we were going. It made me feel so awful that I almost turned around to go back home but I just couldn't afford to lose my job for Clara's sake.

When I arrived at the lot, with a great reluctance I asked the dealer for an appraisal. It hurt me to see him going over every square inch with a fine tooth comb and I knew it hurt Annie, too. Even if I wasn't going to desert her, I was going to get another car. I was going to share Annie with another.

I thought the man would never satisfy himself that Annie was in passable condition. When he finally gave me his estimate, it was hard to keep myself from socking him. Of all the insolence! Anyone would know that Annie was worth more than that! However, keeping myself as cool as possible, I thanked him for his trouble.

After getting behind Annie's wheel, I pushed on the starter. The engine didn't turn over. What could be wrong?

"What's the matter, Mister?" one of the attendants called.

"Don't know, Buddy. Never had any trouble before."

"I'll take a look for you," he said, pulling up the hood. After peering inside at the engine, he shouted, "Hey, Mister, come here a minute, will you? I'm afraid you've got trouble now."

I walked to the side of the attendant and looked inside. Emitting a short cry, I drew back in surprise. The engine was cracked right through the middle.

"Why . . . , " I sputtered, so dumfounded that I could hardly speak. "I don't understand. I drove her all the way down here. And she was all right when the appraiser looked her over just now."

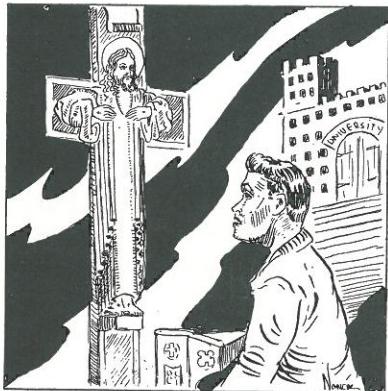
"Well, that's the way it happens with these old cars sometimes. All right one minute, and the next — a cracked engine or something else just as bad."

Both the attendant and the dealer tried as best they knew how to explain this to me. Clara thought that was all there was to it, too. I'll never be able to drive Annie again. That much is certain. But no one will ever be able to convince me that she didn't die of a broken heart.

# Wanted: Catholic Action

LOUIS DELL

*Simple and forthright, as any study of conditions should be, so is this brief study of Catholic Action in our Colleges. We hope that this is the beginning of much more discussion and certainly more action.*



Catholic Action! We have read quite a bit about the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Hierarchy, so much so, that we are made to believe the younger people of today are overrun with enthusiasm for this type of work. Are they? To answer adequately this inquiry a little survey has recently been made. The contents of ten leading Catholic college newspapers, the voice of their activities, have been examined to see just what the younger generation is doing, for after all, in a few short years they will

be writing the history of their age, and if they are not imbued with such principles, who have been trained to lead their fellow-men, the future can promise little in regard to spiritual advancement, and the furthering of high Catholic ideals. Prepared then, to judge the bare facts as they are, let us proceed to examine the evidence and see if there is a strong movement on foot pointing to student participation in this very important task.

First of all, don't be misled to believe that Catholic Action — real Catholic Action exists in an educational system merely because it is under Catholic auspices. Since retreats, days of recollection, triduums, and the like are adequately taken care of by the school authorities, we limit our scope of investigation to those activities whose undertaking are a result of initiative on the student's part. That element combined with the determination to see the project through to successful conclusion is rightly called Catholic Action.

As would be expected, with the outbreak of war, there is an all-out campaign to strengthen the spiritual morale, especially of the men in service. One paper takes the lead in forming a "praying 69th" to do their part in backing up the boys at the front. Still another school sets a splendid example in sending Catholic volumes to the service centers that good reading material may be at hand during the spare moments of the soldier or sailor. The plea of the N.F.C.C.S. to all colleges for a

holy hour that would bring the students to their knees for a new birth of freedom under God, has been answered by three of the representative schools. What about the other seven?

In the same field and also in connection with mission work, one college issues the challenge to solid actioneers for help by prayer and deed, if possible, to the war-worn Philippines. This case offers an excellent opportunity for those who not only claim to be, but are "Catholic to the core." A group at Joliet, Illinois, representing the College of St. Francis provides bundles for Britain, smokes for the Yanks, Scapulars for the soldiers and so forth as they move ahead in their Student Spiritual Defense Battalion. Another activity more in the line of missionary work reveals a group selling hamburgers to the Saturday night stay-at-homers to raise money that they might provide the necessities for needy natives and war refugees. They also collect cancelled stamps and discarded papers to aid in their efforts. From San Antonio, Texas, it is encouraging to see that the lay apostolate of the Incarnate Word College has established five centers of catechetical instruction in a much needed area. Thus far, there is evidence of widespread activity, and if the effort were as great in all other fields, certainly the ideal situation would exist.

In the cases mentioned above, there is without doubt, super-added to the pure motive of Catholic Action, a certain sense of patriotism. In those activities where there is no such incentive, what are the results? In the line of drama, the result is not so encouraging. Two Catholic plays were selected in the ten schools, while such plays and comedies as "Girl Shy" by Katherine Kavanagh and "Artichokes for Dinner" seem to take the spotlight. All productions need not be passion plays, but there is certainly room for some good entertainment emphasizing Catholic ideals and morals.

Looking to the social field, by far too much space is given to the glad expectations of the next super-ball or just reminiscing over the previous one. Only five publications had any material given to the consideration of domestic problems. There are splendid articles on vocations, the sanctification of the home, and discussions on the topic concerning the Catholic trained graduate's failure to take part in parish activities and influence their effectiveness. Two schools sponsor what is called "vocation week," during which there is a little time devoted to the different callings in life. If history means anything at all to us, it is surely a reminder that problems pertinent to the home have been sadly neglected and are, at the very moment, crying aloud for first aid.

To conclude this survey, let us glance at the field of literature, the one place where the means are the most powerful and the most accessible, but the effort put forth represents meagre and puny attempts, considering the opportunities at hand. First of all, among the new books added in the library, a few should be Catholic novels or at least written by recognized Catholic authors. In the two papers that had book reviews,

one Catholic book was treated. This hardly conveys a Catholic spirit, does it? Evidences that not all are sleeping at the switch is manifest by those groups who sponsor Forums that feature outstanding Catholic authors and speakers, who are endeavoring to engender more enthusiasm in this much-neglected field. Four colleges give voice to this movement. Literary and scholastic treatises are very scarce, only two evidences being manifest, one on St. Thomas Aquinas and the other on Cardinal Newman. The endeavors at poetry have the least representation of any field in the survey. In fact, there is nothing worthwhile to even mention, a most discouraging fact, even to say the least. There are, strange to say, many beautiful editorials written on what ought to be done. Action, that is what is needed most in colleges today, action against the pagan philosophy that is gripping the world today, a philosophy based on indifference and the taking of a passive attitude on the important questions of the day.

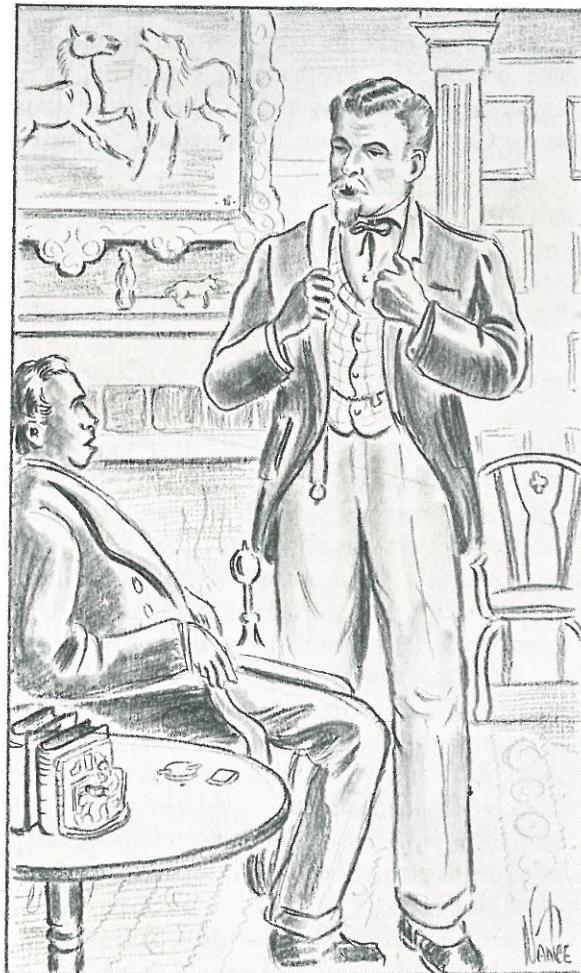
There the facts are, black and white. While some schools are splendid examples of real sincere efforts in the desired direction, and must be commended, on the whole, the program is stagnant, at a standstill for want of capable leadership. They say that a chain is as strong as its weakest link. If this be so, Catholic action has nothing to pull it along. Why is it so?

# Colonel Morrison

JOHN FORD

*These men from the South are themselves completely and unassailably. Their manners possess all the charm of their individuality; their quality is bound up with some long tradition of the past. They are simply colonels — nothing more need be said.*

Russellville is a small town nestled in the heart of the Cumberland plateau, on the banks of the nimble Cumberland River that rushes with fury on westerly to its confluence with the placid and historic Ohio, barely east of Paducah, Kentucky. It is surrounded by stately pines, nature's cathedrals, that populate the verdant hills that roll with the



solemnness of prayer to meet the distant horizons. It is typical of the Cumberland villages, so lifeless in this spacious country where nature has given birth to so many things more immortal than man. In this the greatness of nature, Russellville was indeed a small town.

Every small town, no matter if it be in the capacious Cumberland Valley, the peaceful New England farm country, or the wind-swept plains of the west, is invariably blest with at least one individual who seemingly is as important to the citizens as the town's charter or the white frame church that stands in the center of the borough. The residents look to such a person in joy, trial, failure, success. He must be somewhat a prophet, a counsel, a historian, and a philosopher. Russellville had such an oracle in the person of Colonel R. L. Morrison.

Col. Morrison was truly an experience. To know him was an opportunity; to understand him was a perplexity; to love him was an inevitability. His character was as lucid as a mountain stream; his personality, as majestic, yet as inscrutable as the depth of a mammoth river. His refreshing disposition seemed to reflect the melody and zest of a virgin spring racing down the mountainside with all the enthusiasm and frivolousness of youth.

He was a tall man. He wore a lengthy frock coat that hung carelessly about his slender frame. A soft bi-colored vest revealed a spotless white-winged collar and black ribbon-bow tie that lay upon a studded shirt. A precisely tilted, broad brimmed hat revealed candescent hair that matched his neatly-kept goatee. An otherwise serious contenance was offset by elvish eyes that mirrored the warmness of summer in the face of this man who was in the autumn of life. As to whether or not he was a real colonel I never doubted nor did any of those that knew him. His appearance and manner proved him as nothing else. He was a colonel, a real Kentucky colonel. Surely he must have been.

The leading citizen was usually found at Johnson's General Merchandise store from the time that the sun was majesty of the sky, until long shadows pointed to its conqueror. The colonel's arrival invariably interrupted any card or checker game that might have been in progress. A unified "Howdy" would greet the distinguished gentleman and everyone would slouch into the most comfortable position available and wait for the story that was, without encouragement, about to begin. It was usually a story concerning the early history of the town or some mysterious person or place no one had heard or read about. I suppose the town itself was most discussed. The colonel knew everyone's pedigree and the why's and wherefore's of it. Time in the tales was not represented by weeks, months, or years but rather by "last harvest" or "right after the big tornado" or "before Hank Hawkins' first was born" or "when Irvin McDowell and his Yankees were defeated at Manassas by Joe Johnson."

However, I believe his favorite fable, or rather, narration, was a recount of his trip to Lexington and down through the Blue Grass to Louisville,

where he witnessed a Kentucky Derby. The Colonel repeated it time and time again. He described the huge crowd, the lovely ladies, the mint juleps, and the young thoroughbreds that represented the finest racing blood in America.

His stories were real, exciting, warm experiences with a bit of stretching a fact here and there to make it vivid and vivacious. Even this was done with the subtlety of a politician.

Needless to say, the Colonel was a prominent figure in what politics Russellville had. His opinion was, practically speaking, the people's opinion, for he was regarded as some transcendent power that made few mistakes. However, by no stretch of the imagination was he infallible. He was decidedly human and I believe it was this humanness that caused everyone to love him. The Colonel wasn't an expert — he didn't know everything about something — but seemingly he did know something about everything.

Perhaps the Colonel's chief claim to distinction might be found in his journalistic achievements. The editor of the four-page weekly at the county seat, who I am told was quite a character himself, approached the aged gentleman several days before publication with a request for a few "sayin's." The contribution contained nothing more than quips of homespun philosophy. It was published under the caption "the Colonel says . ." and it followed in something of this manner: "If we weren't afraid of seeming poor a lot of us would get rich . . . No one is perfect and that's why we all have a chance to make a showing. . . . Some men are too lazy to have good luck. . . . Freakish feminine headgear is the vogue, but it will never supplant the 'high hat'. . . . It's better to go straight than to move in the best circles. . . . There is a finality about capital punishment that the pardon boards can't change."

This column itself rarely contained a fact or truth that the readers (there were about 1800 including the county seat) didn't know, but it was written in such a way that it always left one deeply impressed. It was like walking out of a hot house into a garden fresh with dew.

Colonel Morrison was an aged man but not an old one. His love for children so fresh from God, and their love for him, proved that. It is something to be an old man — a tyrant against, and a refugee from, youth. Yet to be an aged man is to have the wisdom of years planted on a youthful and vivacious mind and heart.

Not only the children of Russellville, but everyone, loved him. And it would be difficult to find one unheedful of his advice or incredulous of his prophecies. Just as the men would discuss farming and politics with him, so would the ladies, after prayer-meeting, inquire as to his views on the moral conditions of the world. Just as the young man venturing forth from the town would seek his advice, so the young ladies would seek his suggestions on social functions and etiquette. Just as the boys

would ask to be taught to fish by this expert, so each doll was brought to him for baptism.

Of all, I suppose, youth was most skeptical of his wisdom. Yet as I look back I wonder if it wasn't they who adhered to his advice most.

Thus Russellville's leading citizen and its blessing. I believe it was the Colonel who fitted best in that great country because his greatness was of a simple kind, too. He was truly an essential part of Russellville.

This was how I remember him. This was how I left him. I knew him no better than any of the citizens, yet I knew him intimately. I shall never forget him, his mannerisms, his simplicity, or his dignity. I could not help loving him.

I can see him yet coming up the dusty road accompanied by the merriment of skipping children, bowing gently to every passerby. Colonel R. L. Morrison, Russellville, Kentucky. . . .

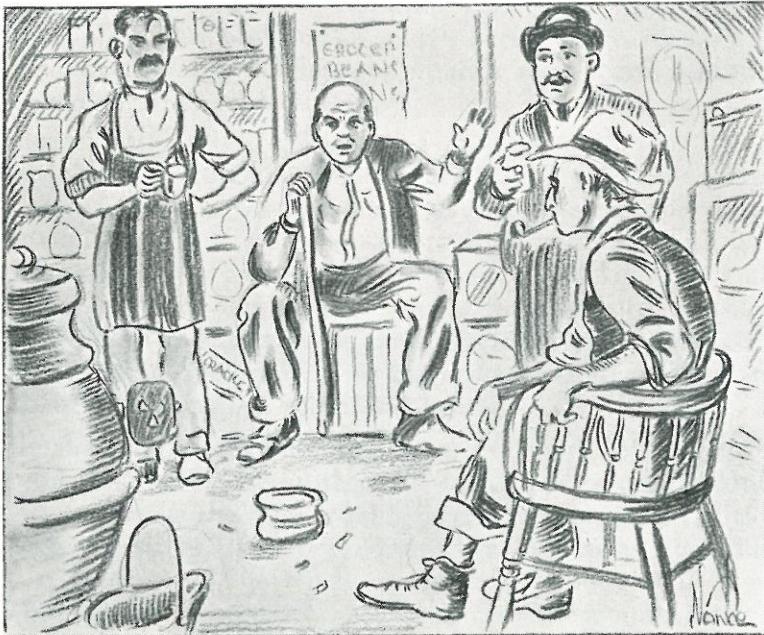
# Old Rail Fences

LEONARD HERRIGES

*It is the old, simple things which so often furnish the material for similes and comparisons: old shoes, a hat, a tinker's dam, and now ordinary rail fences. The allegory is not at all lofty, but it is telling.*

It was Saturday afternoon and the farmers had come to town. The womenfolk drifted off down the street to the new dry goods store, the five and ten, and the A&P Supermarket to do their shopping. The young men were off for the movies, the bowling alley, for the Main Street, to look at the store windows and the girls. But the old timers moved off to the old rendezvous where they had been congregating for the past twenty-five years or more—Jeb Martin's General Store.

Jeb Martin's place had been the emporium of the county seat in its day, and now, even with the competition of supermarkets and chain stores, old Jeb still stayed in business. The old timers were all there this afternoon, as was the traditional pot-bellied stove and the cracker barrel. The old timers were pulling and puffing on their blackened pipes and their conversation drifted up to the grimy ceiling along with the bluish clouds of tobacco smoke. The topic today was fences — a subject brought



up by wrinkled old Earl Carver while telling about his fence troubles in his north pasture.

"No, siree," commented the aged proprietor of the emporium, leaning over the counter, "Fences ain't what they used to be. Things have to be done in too much of a rush nowadays. A fella has to stick up a couple or three crooked old posts, slap some barbed wire on 'em, and then hope that the wind doesn't blow too hard."

"That's the way I find it," drawled a lean and gawky old fellow, as thin and twisted as a fence post himself. "Back in the old days when spring came in March and the rains came in May, I could take a week or two to set up a fence line, and a right good one — straight hickory posts and good barbed wire right from Jeb's store here. It took more than a bull calf to butt one o' them over."

"Some folks up Vermont way used to set a heap of store in stone fences. Leastways I've seen many a picture of 'em in magazines. Time must have hung heavy on their plowshares. There be not time now even to make a stone chimney on your house, much less stone fences." This from John Roden, who owned the big farm with the double concrete silos about two miles north of town.

"I can remember the day when my daddy had a fence about the place made out of a pile of cut wood; just like one long woodpile it was, and many is the day I spent as a young 'un, a crawlin' and a climbin' around that old fence. Came the blizzard of '09 though, and we had to burn the old wood pile fence for fire wood. When I watched that there fence burn up in the stove, I thought my heart was burning up with every ember, even though I was nigh onto twenty-three at that time."

Here Jeb Martin again joined the conversation. "I never did see a prettier sight than a good rail fence, all strong and white in the summer sun and grey in the fall with all the dead oak leaves drifted up again it. And in the winter when the moon was up and the rails were piled with snow — well, I reckon it was a sight to catch the eye of the devil himself."

There was a moment of silence as the men nodded their heads in aged agreement.

"I reckon you don't see anyone making rail fences nowadays," commented someone.

Then Jim Koenig spoke for the first time that day. His voice, despite its age, was as silvery and smooth as his long white beard.

"Nope, it seems as how there's other things to do beside make rail fences. This old world is whirlin' too fast. Back in the days when we were knee high to a colt, we could take the time for such things and never miss it. When our fathers made things, they were made to stay for awhile, but now things are made so fast as they are needed and time is everything. I reckon we can stand by the roadside now like the old rail fences, ornamental, but not of much use. We can stand around while the times come and the times go, until our timbers get too old and

rotten, and then some night when the wind blows too hard, down we go."

There was silence in the store. Out on the street young voices arose as the afternoon show let out. Nice young voices, but ominous in a way. And from up the street came the loud insistent blast of an automobile horn. The bluish clouds of tobacco smoke drifted slowly to the ceiling.

## EDITORIAL

# Another Spring May Come

FRANCIS L. KINNEY



Shortly preceding the outbreak of the war, Deems Taylor, speaking during the intermission time of the New York Philharmonic Symphony concert, was philosophizing upon the slow progress in the composition of serious American music. A country with America's glorious history and advanced mechanical genius should at this time be producing serious music, a distinctly American music composed by men in the acme of musical maturity. But where are these men who studied in American conservatories twenty-five years ago, the students of 1917? — The very date recalls another war.

Into the battles of that conflict went the potential geniuses of America in arts and in science. They willingly gave their lives that the nation might progress in education and culture. Perhaps you may consider them indiscreet, fools lacking in foresight; fools to overlook that fact that culture is fostered only when capable men exist to foster it. Our interest is most natural for we find ourselves in an identical position.

The conditions today are very nearly parallel to those of the last war but this is no assurance that our part is to be the same. Rather, profiting by the mistakes of the past, we carefully seek our position, our niche in the whole of it. It is, moreover, in this course of action that adverse criticism will be leveled against us. By daring to be different, by refusing to follow the crowd, by thinking first and then acting, we will invite caustic criticism of the entire system of liberal education. The College of Liberal Arts may even be declared anachronistic to war conditions.

"Why do colleges persist in following a curriculum of arts when the nation needs men who are trained for specialized positions? Have the colleges no patriotism or does a war situation prove them worthless?" These are questions that educators and students must face and answer. And, we, as Catholic students, must especially be ready to prove our course a true one. It is a duty to live close to that ideal which liberal education holds up for us.

The realization that civilization will not be preserved if all cease cul-

tural pursuits in favor of an All-Out military program is practically self-evident. On the other hand, we know that war cannot be fought, much less won, without man power. Superadded to these realizations we have a real love for our country. Perhaps we even love our country more than vociferous flag-wavers. What, then, is the attitude of the college student toward war?

Since it is so patent that the student of today is to be the builder of a post-war nation, there is only one way in which he can prepare for such an immense task — the student must remain a student. Our government, being wise and foreseeing, has declared that the college program need not be curtailed. It has, rather, urged educators and students to be all the more earnest in their endeavors. In line with this, colleges have adopted the accelerated plan which enables a young man to complete a college course before he is even subject to military service. The student who enters upon this work is not to be criticised in a derogatory manner but rather to be encouraged and aided. Within him is a certain guarantee against post-bellum confusion.

There is no one so foolish who does not think that he will live another year, who does not look forward to another Spring. Therefore, it is not a matter of indifference to us what the future will bring. Rather, it is our duty as potential leaders to insure our generation of a nation which is rich in a heritage of culture, true culture wrought of solid Catholic education. The scene, we admit, is far from ideal today. It is as if a pall of darkness had enveloped us and is seeking to bring about complete dissolution of the regime of Peace and Freedom. This fact, more than anything else, should strengthen our determination to maintain our position. The Winter will pass and there will be another Spring..

## Book Reviews

*Windswept*, by Mary Ellen Chase; The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, 440 pp.

ROBERT HERBERT CAUSLAND

Written in the third person, *Windswept* relates the story of how a beautiful house came to be built and of the joys and sorrows which entered into the lives of its occupants. Love, life, and death, covering a span of three generations, make up the nucleus of this narrative. The settings of this novel and the site of *Windswept*, a purely fictitious house,

are somewhere along the eastern coast of Maine. The story takes its beginning during the early 1880's when "John Marston received his inheritance on that Advent Sunday from his father, Philip Marston, who was buried at *Windswept* on that day."

The author, Mary Ellen Chase, goes on to tell of the happenings taking place within the walls of this house which grew from the tragedy of its first master's death. The house, *Windswept*, is made warm and almost human because it is given a taste of every human emotion, yet it alone remains sturdy and unchangeable throughout the lives of its occupants; these factors tie the story together making it unified and believeable.

This novel could be easily utilized as a study in contrasting characters. Men and women from the lowest and highest walks of life are dealt with during the progression of this narrative. Mrs. Haskell, a New England woman and first housekeeper of *Windswept*, followed by Philomena Pisek, an immigrant from Bohemia and housekeeper after Mrs. Haskell, lend an excellent example of the author's contrasting characters.

In regard to Mrs. Haskell: "An untidy house suggested to her an untidy mind; careless dishwashing resulted in careless or even loose behaviour outside one's kitchen as well as within it."

Then an entirely different picture is drawn by the author of Philomena: "Philomena walked out of her kitchen door and through the blueberries and juniper . . . she sank upon her knees among the long rows of vegetables . . . and belonged there on the earth as a man never could."

Again an example in contrast, we see Jan and Anton, two foreign boys beginning American life together. The former drawing all he could from his new life, being quite successful; the latter ending his road of life quite tragically.

In the last summer of her richly lived, long life, Bessie Parkes Belloc



told her daughter that old age could not be saddening, "for I can always say to myself, 'I, Too, Have Lived In Arcadia.'" The part of her life she referred to, no doubt, is the five years spent with her husband, Louis, in their summer home at La Celle St. Cloud.

Within the limits of a review it is impossible even to suggest the scope and power of this book. It is wholly engaging and completely occupies the reader. Deftly Mrs. Lowndes slips over those periods of her life which were spent in France and England. Although her mother preferred France to England, the author is convinced that London is her home. The charm of this book cannot be easily defined; however, the devotion, understanding, and background shown in this book highly impressed me. Mrs. Lowndes' style is simple and unpretentious, but her book is full of vivid pictures of life in France and England during peace-time and wartime.

*Youth and Immortality*, by Isabel Currier, New York; Alfred Knopf, 1941, 466 pp.

CHARLES SUDROVECH

This is a novel which answers the plea for a Catholic novel! In an atmosphere steeped with Catholocism and Modern Paganism, the author produces a plot which develops into the theme of Thompson's Hound of Heaven — souls, seemingly lost, are then regained to God.

It may be aptly described as the tale of one whose life runs similar to that of the prodigal son's. It portrays the molding of character in childhood, intermingled with a serious impairment of Faith in adolescence, and then a fruitful recovery in adulthood.

Gretchen MacArthur, the American girl who is trained in a Canadian Convent, occupies the focus of attention. She is the girl who is imbued with the substantial and consoling truths of Catholicism; who later falters within the tantalizing grip of Materialism and self-love; then recovers through the influence of her first love, her first inspiration — Sister Catherine of Siena, intellectual light in Philosophy.

The plot carries us through her school days, her maladjustment in a new life, her tragic marriage to the drunken poet, Kevin O'Callaghan; her consequent meeting of Joel Richmond, the Jewish Psychiatrist-Convert and future husband; finally, her restoration to the Faith.

The style of the writer is that of suggestiveness — one is forced to deduce facts from "conversations." However, aside from this fact, the work flows fluently throughout.

For the psychologist, this book will provide an evening of rare entertainment; for the doubter and the disturbed, it may provide the answer to puzzling problems; for the lover of Apologetics, it comes with mighty force and power.

Family life, of course, holds the center of attraction in this novel.

And rightly so, because houses such as *Windswept* were made to be enjoyed by families seeking each others companionship and love. Herein are treated delicate, distasteful subjects, but not in the stark, ribald manner to which we are often exposed by twentieth century, so-called, realists. War, too, with its icy finger of death and sorrow penetrates the warm walls of *Windswept*, only to be melted on the hearth of love kept burning by the remaining members of a united household.

Some books are written to be enjoyed by only the intellectual elite. Still other novels can be read by only those having great intestinal stamina. Many written pieces are boring to the student and enjoyable in the eyes of the professor. But *Windswept* was written to be enjoyed by persons in any and all walks of life. Mary Ellen Chase has given to the reading public a happy medium in composition.

*And Down the Days*, by John Louis Bonn, S. J.; MacMillan Company, New York, 1942, 306 pp.

DAN H. GOLDCAMP

This Catholic novel recently published by Father Bonn of Boston College is unique in that it is a true story which characterizes a woman as the daughter of an apostatized nun. The story weaves around the life of Lizzie St. John, her pitiful subsistence in the slums of New York, her activities with Aunt Mercy in her teens, her marriage, divorce, and wicked deeds, and finally, her return to God. Her early life accustomed her to very little of a good environment, for her father was a drunkard and her mother, known as Maria Monk, was the author of an astonishing book, "Awful Disclosures," which falsely portrayed the life of the nuns. Her father sent her away and she stayed with her Aunt Mercy until she took a job in a shirt factory. She married an American ambassador to France but divorced him later, assuming his name of Eckel. From this marriage one child, Genevieve, was born. Lizzie secured her money by fraudulent methods but stepped easily into French society due to her exotic beauty and extreme wealth. Here she met Laferriere, a distinguished French nobleman, and a Catholic with whom she fell in love.

She continued to swindle men out of money and lead a life of sin, condemning Catholocism and proclaiming to be an atheist. Through the efforts of Laferriere, Genevieve, who was now about three years old, was sent to a convent. Laferriere never married Madame Eckel but advised her to return to America to live her life. With the aid of supernatural grace she finally realized that there was a God, so she became a good Catholic and promised Him she would send Genevieve to be a nun. Madame Eckel then returned to America, New York — her teen-age home town — and in honor of God built a church upon the top of the mountain where she had spent many hours of her childhood days.

Throughout this story, Father Bonn has consistently enunciated Madam Eckel's fear of being detected as the daughter of Maria Monk.

This is the only connecting link throughout the story, otherwise, it is loosely bound both in plot and climax. Although *And Down The Days* is basically a biography of Lizzie St. John, Laferriere remains in my mind as the chief character, for in his hands rested her soul. Without his prayers and advice, the end of this story would undoubtedly have been much different. For Catholic readers it is especially interesting since it shows the weak will of the atheist, the impossibility of there being no God, the hopelessness of one influenced by a bad environment, and the grace needed to enfold a disbeliever into God's chosen few.

"*I, Too, Have Lived In Arcadia,*" by Mrs. Belloc Lowndes; Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, 1942, 318 pp.

JACK CARON

Marie Belloc Lowndes gives us a book in a class of its own, a prelude to autobiography: the brief, beautiful married life of her parents, their amazing love story, the world-shaking events that went on around the early childhood of Marie and her brother Hilaire.

Bessie Parkes Belloc, the author's mother, is in the foreground of the book from beginning to end. She has a tender, sensitive nature and is extremely feminine. She has a passionate admiration for Shelley, and enjoys all the current novels. Bessie P. Belloc was born in England, and met her French husband when she chanced to rent a summer home from her future husband's mother, Louise Swanton Belloc. The married life of Bessie and Louis Belloc lasted but five years, at which time Louis died of a sunstroke. Their time was chiefly spent in France, with several trips to England.

The German invasion of France, the siege of Paris, the courage, bravery, and true quality of the French people is clearly brought out in "*I, Too, Have Lived In Arcadia*" when the author gives her account of the War of 1870-1871. Particularly she features the horrors of famine and the destruction of property by the German invaders. The various personal letters presented in the book that treat with the war give vivid pictures of the starvation of the people and the destruction of the homes belonging to their immediate family.

Made exceedingly different from other types of autobiography, Mrs. Lowndes gives an accurate account of her family history and background from 1867 to 1881. This book is distinct from others' of its type in that the facts concerning the lives of her relations are not merely stated, but rather these relations' letters, which have been cherished and treasured by the author, make up a good part of the book. Seeing that this is the case, one may well be tempted to skip a number of these letters and be satisfied with such a cursory treatment of the book. However, this is not advisable as most of these letters are certainly interesting and enable the reader to understand and become better acquainted with the various characters.

*History of Benton County and Historic Oxford*, by Jesse Setlington Birch; Oxford, Ind., Craw & Craw, 1942, 386 pp.

G. R. SCHREIBER

Portions of this book come out of the hustle and bustle of modern living as a cool breeze out of the desert. It is a story of the old things, the old days: Of gaslit streets on Saturday night; of the smell of the circus sawdust ring in summer; of the new-turned earth, the hazel brush, and the plum thicket. But mostly it is of memory.

*The History of Benton County and Historic Oxford* is not a history in the common sense of that word. It is not a story bound closely by chronological order. Many of them are not even dated. They are merely, "so many years ago." It is not so much a history of a county and of a town as it is the journal of a boy, a youth, and a man.

Jesse Setlington Birch — journalist and historian — was of that generation which lived in two ages. He was first a pioneer; and, later in twilight of his life, he was of the modern times. Out of the observations of the passing years he formed his book. For those things out of reach of his memory he did painstaking research.

Much of the book is given over to historical data that is not interesting to the ordinary reader, though there are informative paragraphs on Phoebe and Alice Cary who made their home in Oxford. But the generalities of life in a small town, and the philosophical observations of the writer make the book valuable. For the keen reader there is a wealth of small detail about life in the mid-west when this prairie land was still young in the white man's mind.

A book like this history is meant for a quiet evening. There is so much change in the world it is good to live again an hour in the things that are past. It is as Jesse Birch writes: "Pioneer memories are sweet — old friends with whom one has walked and wrought in youth can seldom be replaced. There is no time like the old time, no song like the old song."

# Exchanges

JOHN L. GOETZ



During the process of scanning the numerous publications which have reached the Exchange Department during the past several weeks, a question rose trembling into our mind. This question appears to be quite obvious; no definite conclusions may be inferred from its answer, yet here it is: Just what are young Catholic men and women, as a whole, writing in their collegiate literary journals?

"The usual cut and dried articles," you will answer. Unfortunately, yes. Entirely too many of them—"My First Week in School," "Beautiful Young Maiden Wins Bashful Football Hero," "Bashful Hero Wins Game in Nick of Time." (Just a few of the latter; nevertheless . . .). There are, to offset these, however, many works of real value. Shall we disregard quality just now, and inquire into the several fields of composition in which collegiate literary endeavor lies this spring.

Leafing through some forty representative publications, which would seem to present an adequate cross section of the Catholic collegiate journals from Maine to Missouri, we find it easier to classify them further into publications of men's, women's and co-educational schools. Also, we shall differentiate between the East and the Midwest.

Men in the East are serious this spring. Their output of serious essays and scholarly works outranks all other fields. Poetry is barely outstripped by these essays (rhymer take notice). Surprisingly enough, these poems do anything but reflect the confused times. On the contrary, many have a real "bang" for the reader who enjoys humor. Witness *A Brooklynite to His Love* by Martin F. Conroy in the *Holy Cross Purple* for March.

Eastern women continue the poetic tradition of the men. Their work is on the whole more bloomy and sober than the men's, sometimes even making attempts to be downright tragic. Short stories are close behind, numerically. As for their Midwestern sisters, we find more of the same poetry (somewhat improved), with serious essays a very close second. These essays are surprisingly numerous, and very scholarly, indeed.

Midwestern men are equally divided, it seems, between the short story and the serious essay. Too bad that so many of the short story plots are woefully weak.

As a whole, the co-educational schools cater to verse and scholarly works.

We could not help noticing that nine out of ten editors are war-minded — at least they were when writing their editorials. Several editors have gone so far as to publish Victory Editions. In this category the *Rosary College Eagle* is quite nicely set up, while the *Seton Quarterly* is somewhat incoherent. Perhaps a few less book reviews, and better organization of material would not be amiss.

A serious lack of exchange departments is at once apparent to one scanning the pages of collegiate journals. By actual count, less than fifteen percent of the publications examined contained an exchange. The importance of this mode of cooperation among young writers should not be underestimated. Friendly criticism more than all else, will lead to the steady improvement of creative work. To repeat the words of this department on several former occasions, the idea of exchanges among college magazines embodies more than the mere physical act of mailing.

As an example of a well balanced, readable publication, we offer the Spring issue of *The Crimson and Gray* of Saint Joseph's, Philadelphia. Its contents are so varied that everyone should find something to his taste, yet there is no clashing of one article against the other. Readable type and a restrained cover which catches the eye go to make up an attractive journal.

# Critical Notes

PAUL F. SPECKBAUGH, C.P.P.S.

In these few pages of notation and commentary on various items of Catholic Action in the educational world some matters have not only been mentioned but have borne repetition to a point that might have become tedium. This seems to be the necessary way, the technique, I suppose, of throwing enough mud.

My brightest hope in this procedure was for the bringing forth of some kind of response. So far there has been none. Why?

The answer to that question is not easily forthcoming. Should anyone possess the key to the situation, advice and correction will be gratefully appreciated.

\* \* \* \*

The position of Catholic literature in the world of graduate study can only be described as something of a plight. Pages are being turned and pens are flowing ink in the interests of countless great figures in the history of English literature. Comparatively few investigations have turned their lights into the domain of Catholic Letters. Is it possible that our Catholic Universities actually subscribe to the belief that nothing good can come out of Nazareth? Surely the middle ages are filled with problems waiting only for the Catholic answer. Surely the Catholic Revival has something of sufficient stature. Surely modern poets, dramatists, and novelists need the guidance of a perennial philosophy.

Perhaps the answer lies in our lack of unity. There is a Catholic Philosophical Association and it does noble work. There is an historical society and it, too, advances. Poets and dramatists have formed some sort of unions, but where is the Catholic Literature Association? Would a Catholic group, present at the Modern Language Association Convention as Catholics are present at the Library Convention, make an impression upon their fellow scholars by their industry, their learning, their ability? Perhaps this wish is too fond and idealistic; perhaps it is nothing more than a plain need.

\* \* \* \*

In a very recent edition of the *New York Times* Mr. Brooks Atkinson comments on the present status of the theatre:

"It is the worst season the New York theatre has had for twenty years, and possibly much longer than that. Although it has turned up a few amusing and original plays . . . it has not yielded a single play of memorable stature or creative force, and is almost completely lacking in the sort of vitality given off by an art form that is progressing . . . Why? Basically because playwrights are not

turning life into drama with anything like mastery of either life or the theatre medium . . . ”

Somehow or other, this commentary provides hours of meditation for the teacher of Catholic literature, particularly for the teacher of creative writing. If Catholics have the best understanding of life, if producers are waiting for the plays to be written, well, if . . . if . . .

\* \* \* \*

I am reminded of a suggestion which appeared in this column before: the opening, during some Summer Session, of a Catholic Writers' Institute. The few leaders we have in the field of drama, poetry, and fiction might be tempted into giving some professional assistance to struggling, but willing, young writers. The thought seems to have gained acceptance in other circles that the mere business of talking over one's literary plans (seriously, of course) with someone older and more expert is a tremendous help. Perhaps it is not.

\* \* \* \*

Here are some few subjects which might bring forth some very interesting discussion:

Item: the scientific content of Francis Thompson's *Orient Ode*.

Item: the standardization of the cinema according to a formula that has long ago become uninteresting.

Item: a comparison of recent records of parish theatricals and Emmet Lavery's article, "*The Plays Are On the Shelves*."

Item: a study of the true meaning of pleasure and art, or of the pretty and the beautiful.

Item: an open forum discussion of Father Reinhold's fine article, "*The Inroads of the Bourgeoisie Spirit*" in a recent issue of the *Commonweal*.

\* \* \* \*

What a blessed thing it would be if all the young people of our land would join a crusade to fight for their right to read. While they are being taught the ways of reading and writing, they are being forced into a life of illiteracy. And this is no less dangerous than the loss of freedom.

For, instead of words, and sentences, and books, they are being given an evening, and a life, of radio, of cinema, and of picture magazines. Sometimes it almost seems that the alphabet is about to go into desuetude. We pray that it will not.

What might be the results of a poll taken among our Catholic College students on this question: who may be called the Great Catholic of the past year? or what is the greatest achievement of our Faith in this past year? The answer would be most interesting from the point of view of its broadness or extension. How much would it differ from the decision of certain Catholic universities and colleges in our land?

\* \* \* \*

These remarks have been simple and forthright; they are meant for

but one thing: the advancement and progress of Catholic education here in America. The objections may be raised that these times are not propitious for such activity. The reply is simply that all time is God's time. These notes are not meant to be carping; they are offered for further discussion, with the hope that working together we might succeed.